PROPHETS OF ALLAH

Part-II

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The Prophets of Allah are the best teachers of mankind. They guided the humanity to the right path and did their best to save it from going astray. Their lives are the models to be copied for all times to come and their footprints are to be followed for success in this world and in the next world. Therefore, knowledge about the Prophets' lives and mission is most essential for each and every person. It is as important for Muslim children as it is for elders. With this end in view, we have published this series. Insha Allah, we shall publish a number of small books for children in easy and simple language.

This series consists of four books:

Book I—introduces the very first Prophet—the father of mankind, the first man on earth—Hadrat Adam, the famous Prophet Noah and one of the earliest Prophets Hadrat Hud (peace be upon them).

Book II—narrates the lives of Prophets Saleh, Abraham and Lut (peace be upon them).

We hope that this attempt will be appreciated by the public at large and Islam loving parents in particular. They will find these books useful for educating their children and bringing them up as Muslims.

PUBLISHERS

PROPHET YOUSUF

My dear children! You have read the story of Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) (may peace be upon him) who had two sons, Ismail and Is'haaq (peace be upon them). Prophet Ismail's (Ishmael's) children started living in Mecca and Prophet Is'haaq (Isaac) in Canaan (Palestine). Prophet Is'haaq's son was Prophet Yaqub (Jacob) (peace be upon him) to whom Allah gave twelve sons. Of these twelve sons, two were from one mother, Yousuf (Joseph) and Bin Yaameen (Benjamin), and the other ten were their step– brothers. Prophet Yaqub was the chief of his people and his sons were incharge of the sheeps and cattle that grazed in the hill–sides. Yousuf was handsome, pious and intelligent from his childhood, and the favourite of his father. Often it so happened that when the elder sons went away with their cattle, Prophet Yaqub would take Yousuf out into the field and would tell him about Allah and His creations.

Prophet Yaqub's ten sons were not good men. They were selfish and quarrelsome, and they often told lies and deceived their father. When young Yousuf saw his brothers doing wrong, it pained him and he would advise them to do the right. But they did not care much for his words of advice. Moreover, the ten brothers did

not like that their father should love young Yousuf more than others.

In those days only that man was considered important, who had a large number of strong and sturdy sons, grandsons, brothers and nephews. Nobody could dare harm such a family and everybody was afraid of them. No wonder that the ten brothers thought: "It is we who are more powerful than this lean and weak lad, Yousuf who is just one by himself. He cannot be of much use to our father. It is we whom our father should love. But it is strange that he has no love for us; his whole love is for Yousuf".

Days passed on like this. Yousuf was now 17 years. One night he saw a strange dream. He went to his father and said, "Father! In a dream last night I saw eleven stars, and the sun and the moon, all bowing down to me". On hearing this dream Prophet Yaqub, said: "My son, Do not tell this dream to your step-brothers. I am afraid, they may start harming you. To me it appears that your Lord will choose you for His task. He will make you His apostle, and give you a lot of wisdom and understanding. He will be kind to you, as He was kind to your grandfather, Prophet Is'haaq (peace be upon him) and to your great grandfather, Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him), who were made Prophets by Him."

After hearing this dream, Prophet Yaqub started paying more attention to Yousuf, his most beloved son.

This proved too much for the ten step–brothers. They got together at a place to discuss the matter. They said, "It seems that our father has lost his balance of mind. He should have had a high regard for us. We are a strong group. Why should he keep us away and love only Yousuf?" So the ten brothers thought of a highly wicked plan. They conspired and said, "Let us take Yousuf to some far off place, and kill him or leave him there alone. When there is no Yousuf around, our father will have no choice but love us." However, one of them said, "No, don't kill Yousuf, but throw him into a dark well in a far off jungle. Some passing caravan will take him out of the well and carry him away".

This wicked scheme was liked by every one. Then they went over to their father and talked of Yousuf in a pleasant manner. They said, "Father! we want Yousuf to enjoy life. We want him to go with us to the jungle, and to have a joy ride and other fun. Father! Have trust in us. After all we are full–grown men, strong enough to look after Yousuf and take care of him. We assure you that no harm will come to Yousuf as long as we are there."

Prophet Yaqub clamly said to his sons "I fear you may be lost in your games and some wolf may eat up Yousuf". With one voice, the sons said, "We are a full batch of sturdy young men. If some wolf eats up Yousuf, then certainly we would be a useless lot." So, in this manner the ten brothers took Yousuf away with

them to the jungle. The brothers had selected a dreadful place for the wicked deed. As planned, when they arrived at that place, they threw away Yousuf in the dark well. At that moment, Allah in His infinite mercy, gave peace of mind to Yousuf. He was confident that his Lord Allah would rescue him from this distress.

But while doing this, the brothers had in their minds the picture of their father. Now they would have to explain what had happened to Yousuf. How could they go back home and face their father? So in order to deceive their father, they dipped Yousuf's shirt in the blood of an animal. Then they started towards home crying and beating their breasts. They went before their father, who was anxiously waiting for them, and said, "Father! We all started playing in the field and left Yousuf behind to look after our clothes. Suddenly, as if from nowhere, a wolf came and ate away Yousuf. Just see his shirt; it is all covered with blood."

The grief-stricken father looked at the bloodstained shirt and said, "This is just a false story. It is clearly a mischief and trick. I am not prepared to believe what you have said. But what can't be cured must be endured. So I will have patience and pray to my Allah to help me."

Probably the brothers were happy. They said to one another, "Well! We have now got rid of Yousuf". But they did not know that Allah was watching over young Yousuf. It so happened that when the ten brothers

went back home leaving young Yousuf in the dark well, there came a caravan. They sent a man to bring water for their men. As the man lowered the bucket into the well to draw out water, he was amazed to see a boy standing at the bottom of the well. At once he shouted to his companions: "Good news to all of you, I have found a boy in the well."

The men hurried forward and pulled the boy out of the well. They hid him in their luggage so that they may sell him as a slave. But little did they realise that what they were doing was exactly the Will of Allah Who is the Creator of all people.

Young Yousuf, who was a son of a Prophet, staunchly believed in Allah. He never lost his hope for a moment. He prayed to Allah in this hour of distress and trial. He was confident that Allah will rescue him and exactly it happened so.

SOLD AS A SLAVE

At last after a long journey, the caravan reached the capital of Egypt with young Yousuf in its custody. As the members of caravan were not interested in young Yousuf, they wanted to dispose him of as early as possible.

By chance a high ranking official of Egypt, called *Aziz–i– Misr*, visited the market. The charming manners, and beautiful personality of young Yousuf attracted *Aziz–i–Misr*. He looked at Yousuf and soon reached at the conclusion that this charming boy belonged to some respectable family and had by chance fallen into the hands of the caravan. He consulted his wife and decided to purchase Yousuf from the caravan. Thus the caravan sold Yousuf cheaply to the *Aziz*. The *Aziz* said to his wife, "Keep this boy well. Just possible that he proves himself useful for us and we may adopt him as our son." As Yousuf was brought up in the family of the Prophets of Allah, he was pious and God–fearing in all his dealings. As a slave, young Yousuf, who was by now 18 years old, worked so honestly and faithfully that soon the *Aziz* gave him the entire charge of his house and property. Young Yousuf managed the affairs so ably that he soon carved the confidence of his new master and was treated by him as his son.

HADRAT YOUSUF IN AZIZ–I–MISR'S HOUSE

So it was the Will of Allah that Yousuf found himself into the family of a high ranking government official. In this house, young Yousuf had all the facilities to learn the art of managing state and becoming a good officer. It looked as if in this house, young Yousuf was to be trained for the high mission, Allah wanted him to perform. Mysterious are the ways of Allah! On the one hand, Yousuf got a good house to live in, and on other, he was getting an excellent training which princes only can have in royal palaces.

Dear children! It is perfectly true that Allah's plans never fail, though little do most know the real purpose of His Will. Young Yousuf had held this high position in *Aziz's* house for a number of years, when he came face to face with a severe test. *Aziz's* wife, Zulekha, who was not a good woman, one day, when her husband was away, shut youthful Yousuf up in a room and invited him towards herself. But the young man feared Allah and refused to listen to her. He said, "I seek Allah's protection. Woe to me if I do anything bad, particularly when my Allah has given me such a good place to live where I am treated with respect. I cannot even think of doing such a wicked deed. My Lord never allows the wrong–doers to prosper."

But this frank talk had no effect on the wicked woman and she advanced towards Yousuf. However,

her charms had no effect on the young man, whom Allah willed to give protection from evil. Thus young Yousuf who had been chosen by Allah to be a Prophet, came out successful from the severe test.

When Yousuf saw the woman advancing towards him, he ran towards the door. Zulekha also ran after him and caught hold of his shirt from behind. As Yousuf tried hard to get away, a portion of his shirt was torn off. Yousuf opened the door and ran out. After him ran Zulekha also. But as the two came out of the room, they found themselves before the *Aziz* himself, who had by chance returned home much before time. This made the wicked woman extremely nervous. She had been found in a very ugly situation by her own husband. She knew that it was she herself who had made advances towards Yousuf. So in order to hide her crime and prove her innocence, she coined a totally false story against Yousuf. Pretending to be innocent, she put a straight question to her puzzled husband: "What punishment do you propose for a man who has an evil intention towards your wife?" And without waiting for the answer, she provided a reply herself, "Prison is the only place fit for such a wrong–doer as a punishment which he should never be able to forget in life."

Yousuf was shocked to hear this. He quietly said only this: "No, in fact, she was forcing me to do the wicked deed; and it was I who did not agree to it."

TORN SHIRT

But to the good luck of Yousuf, there appeared on the scene a relative of Zulekha herself.

He knew everything about the character of the wicked woman. So he at once understood the whole matter. Very wisely he said to the *Aziz*, "Examine the shirt of Yousuf. If it is torn from the front, then Yousuf is a liar. But if the shirt is torn from behind, then this woman is a liar and the young man is telling the truth."

This analysis of the whole matter by one of Zulekha's own relative made things quite plain to the *Aziz*. So very angrily he said to his wife, "Look! this is all your mischief. You women have very cunning methods and ways." Then turning to Yousuf, he said, "Yousuf, leave it and forget all about it." And to the woman he said, "Apologise to Yousuf. The fault is yours."

But this ugly incident soon became the talk of the town. It was a favourite topic with women. They would say, "Very strange! *Aziz's* wife is madly in love with her slave. She must be totally out of her senses."

A FEAST ARRANGED

When Zulekha heard all this, she was beside herself with anger. One day she invited all those women to dine with her and seated them on soft cushions. Then she got fruits and knives placed before each of them. Just when the women picked up the knives to cut fruits, Zulekha called Yousuf in. Seeing him they were so enchanted by his beauty and grace that instead of cutting fruit they cut their fingers. In amazement, they exclaimed, "O Lord! he is not an ordinary mortal, but an angel." The whole scheme of Zulekha worked well. Excited over the success of her plan, she said to the women, "Did you see! This is the man about whom you have been talking and blaming me. I tried my best to win him over, but he got away." Then seeing the changed mood of the women, she said, "If he (Yousuf) still does not listen to me, he shall find himself in the prison."

Dear children! This shows that the women of Egypt had become very shameless in those days. Similar is the case with the modern women of today. In fact, the followers of Satan have always behaved in the same way in every period of history.

When Yousuf heard of the evil intention of Zulekha, he prayed, "O my Allah! Jail is a better place for me, than that which she wants me to do. My

Lord, if you did not save me from the evil intentions of this wicked woman, I fear I shall fall in her trap and so find myself among the evil–doers."

A MODEL YOUTH

You have seen, children that Yousuf was a noble man. You have also seen the condition of the women of high society of Egypt in those days who were mad after him. They invited him towards sin but Allah saved him from it.

This proves that if a person decides to remain pure and clean and is determined to tread the right path, Allah also comes to his help. Allah listened to the prayer of Yousuf and protected him from the advances of the wicked woman. The fact is that Allah alone hears the prayers of men and He alone is the Knower of everything. To save Zulekha from a bad name, her husband sent innocent Yousuf to the jail. But the women of high families knew that Yousuf was innocent. Now the talk of the town was the piety and righteous behaviour of Yousuf. Everybody knew how good and virtuous he was.

Tests and trials are in most cases necessary for preparing a man for a mission. This story made Yousuf famous all over the country as a pious and God–fearing man. This good reputation was to help him in future as a Messenger of Allah.

YOUSUF IN PRISON

Days and weeks passed, and no one came to help the innocent young man, who was passing his days in the prison. He had no friend in the country to help him. But in spite of this unfair punishment, Hadrat Yousuf was determined to obey his Allah and do the right.

One day there was a great excitement and noise in the prison. A royal baker and a butler were sent there by the order of the king. The two new prisoners were highly impressed by the piety and righteousness of Hadrat Yousuf who was now a favourite of every prisoner as a result of his excellent character. One day the butler and the baker met Hadrat Yousuf and requested him to tell them meanings of strange dreams that they had dreamt. Hadrat Yousuf replied: "Allah alone knows the meanings of dreams. Let me see what your dreams are."

First the butler said: "I saw in my dream that I took the bunches of grapes and prepared wine for the king".

Hadrat Yousuf listened to the butler's story carefully. Then the baker said: "I saw in my dream a basket on my head. In the basket there were breads for the king. I saw birds picking breads from the basket."

Hadrat Yousuf said to both of them: "I will tell you the meanings of these dreams before your daily meals are served. But I must tell you that the knowledge of

telling the meanings of dreams has been given to me by my Lord. To tell you the truth, I don't follow the ways of those people who do not believe in Allah and who deny the life after death in the next world. I have chosen the path of my forefathers, Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham), Prophet Is'haaq (Isaac) and Prophet Yaqub (Jacob). It is not good for us to make other partners with Allah. It is an act of His infinite kindness that He has shown us the way to His religion. He made us His own bondmen and keeping us to Himself, has saved us from the slavery of everybody else. Those who refuse to be servants of Allah are forced to be slaves of others. But alas! There are many people who do not know even this simple truth. They forget that they are the bondsmen of Allah alone, who fulfils all their needs and requirements."

"O my jail–mates, just think for a moment: What is better—to bow down before a large number of gods and goddesses or to worship one Master, Who is All–Powerful and can do everything He likes? You leave Him and bow before others simply because you and your forefathers had given them some names. You have made those gods and goddesses with your own hands. Is it not funny that you bow down before them? Have you got any proof for what you say or do?

"Remember, my jail–mates! Power to rule belongs to Allah alone. It is for Him alone to give orders. He has commanded us to bow before Him alone and not before anybody else. This is the straight path for us to

lead life, but a large number of people do not know this."

Then to the butler he said: "The king will call you back and reinstate you in your job."

To the baker he said: "The basket means that you will be hanged and the birds shall eat the flesh of your body."

In a few days the king restored the butler to his position; but the baker was hanged. Thus the words of Hadrat Yousuf proved true, for Allah was with him.

When the butler was leaving the prison, Prophet Yousuf (peace be upon him) said to him: "Please remember me when you go back to the king. Kindly mention my case to the king, and request for my release from the prison as I have done nothing wrong for which I should be put into a dark cell."

As Hadrat Yousuf (peace be upon him) watched the butler go back to the palace, he hoped that the man would remember him. But days, weeks and months passed, and nothing happened. The butler forgot the promise he had made with Hadrat Yousuf. Thus an innocent man still waited in the prison and wondered when his prayer would be answered.

THE KING HAS A DREAM

One day in the king's palace there was great excitement and confusion. The king was worried and troubled because he had dreamt a strange dream. The king had called the ministers and the wisemen to tell him the meaning of his dream. They plainly told the king: "We cannot tell the meaning of a confused dream. It does not seem to be a true dream." But this did not satisfy the king. He was angry and wanted to know the correct meaning of his dream.

It was at this time that the butler thought of Hadrat Yousuf, whom he had totally forgotten. He went hurriedly to the king and told him all about Hadrat Yousuf and sought his permission to find out the meaning of the dream from Hadrat Yousuf. Eager to find someone to help him, the king allowed his butler to visit the prison immediately. The butler related the king's dream to Hadrat Yousuf in these words: "In his dream, the king saw that seven fat and beautiful cows came out. Then after a while came out seven other cows who were thin and lean. The lean and ugly cows ate up the seven fat cows."

Continuing, the butler said: "In the same dream the king saw seven ears of grain full and plump. Then there sprouted seven other ears, withered and blasted by the wind. Then all of a sudden the thin ears covered up the seven fat ears."

Hadrat Yousuf heard the king's dream very carefully and said: "Allah has shown the king what was going to happen in the country. The seven fat cows and the seven plump ears of grain mean the next seven years when Egypt will have good crops and rich harvests. After that there will come seven years of severe food shortage and famine, represented by the weak cows and thin ears of grain. So store the food in godowns and leave the grain back into the ears. Thus you will be able to face the famine with ease."

HADRAT YOUSUF IN KING'S COURT

When the king heard the meaning of his dream, he ordered that Yousuf be brought to his court immediately. But Hadrat Yousuf plainly told the king's men to go back and ask the king to tell him why he was put behind the bars. He also demanded that the women who had cut their hands with fruit knives should also be questioned in order to make the whole matter clear.

The king called the women in his presence and said: "What do you say about Yousuf? You were those who did whatever you could, to win him over." With one voice the women said: "Allah be praised! We did not find anything bad in Yousuf."

When Hadrat Yousuf heard of the statements of the women, he said: "I have got my purpose. I only wanted to tell *Aziz–i–Misr* that I have not been dishonest to him when he was away from home. I know, my God does not allow such tricks to succeed. I do not claim to be a faultless person, because man's evil selfurges him to do bad deeds. But the one with whom my God is kind, he is kept away from evil. Allah is Forgiving and Kind."

Having heard the whole story, the king ordered that Yousuf be brought in his presence. When Hadrat

Yousuf came, the king said, "I wish to appoint you as my advisor and entrust you with some important job." Prophet Yousuf (peace be upon him) said: "Appoint me over the treasures of the land, as I can guard them well and I have the necessary knowledge and experience for the job." The king readily agreed to it.

HADRAT YOUSUF'S NEW ROLE

From the dark cell of the prison to the seat of power, is a big jump. Just see how Allah the Almighty took Hadrat Yousuf out of the well, then out of the prison cell and gave him the reins of such a big country. Now he had the power and authority to do whatever he liked. These are the ways of Allah. The truth is that from Him righteous men do get high rewards for their good deeds. The rewards of next world will be the real rewards for the faithful.

Now Prophet Yousuf was the master of the whole country. He lost no time in making adequate arrangements for storing the food grains for the next seven years of famine. During the seven years the land was filled with plenty of food grains. Big godowns were built and a lot of grain was stored in them.

As the seven good years passed, the lean years began. There was drought and food shortage in the country. The grass grew brown and dried up and the cattle had nothing to eat.

Propeht Yousuf's hard work and good planning were fully rewarded. There was enough food in Egypt. People from far off places also started coming to Egypt to get grain for their families. In the land of Canaan, too, where Prophet Yaqub (peace be upon him) and his eleven sons lived, there was food shortage.

YOUSUF'S BROTHERS COME TO EGYPT

The ten brothers set out on the road to Egypt. Bin Yaameen (Benjamin) was not allowed by his father to go along with his step–brothers. In Egypt, the brothers found their place in the crowd and awaited their turn. When their turn came they made their request for grain to the Royal Officer, who was no other man but Prophet Yousuf (peace be upon him) himself. The royal officer had no difficulty in recognising his step–brothers but not so the ten brothers, who could not even dream that the royal officer was Yousuf himself. Prophet Yousuf (peace be upon him) did not reveal this secret and treated his step–brothers as strangers.

"Where have you come from?" he said to them.

"From the land of Canaan to buy food", they replied.

Prophet Yousuf remembered how his brothers had thrown him into the well and had taken away even his shirt. He wondered if they were still as cruel and wicked as before.

Upon his enquiry they said: "We are twelve brothers in all. We are the sons of an old man living in the land of Canaan, the youngest one is with our father and the twelfth one is no more." But as there was a sort of rationing system in Egypt, the ten brothers got only

their share. They were unable to get the share of their old father and the eleventh brother. When they pressed hard, the Royal Officer said: "Well, this time I give you more grain. But don't come to me again without your eleventh brother. If the old father cannot come, the young son can certainly come. So do bring him with you next time."

On the other side, Prophet Yousuf had ordered his servants to put their money back into their packs. He did this as a bait to encourage them to bring along with them next time his real brother, Bin Yaameen. He was impatient to see him as soon as possible. Reaching home, the ten brothers told their father the story of their journey and urged him to send Bin Yaameen with them next time. The father said, "You shall not take my youngest and dearest son with you. Have I not lost Yousuf already? Now you are asking me to trust you again. And shall I have to lose Bin Yaameen, too? No, you shall not take him with you though the real Protector is Allah alone."

But when these brothers opened their sacks of corn, they cried out in surprise and joy and said: "Father! Our money has been returned to us. It is right inside our packs." This goodwill gesture of the Egyptian Royal Officer gave strength to the demand of these brothers to take Bin Yaameen with them to Egypt next time.

The father said: "I cannot send Bin Yaameen with you unless you promise on oath that you will not return

without him. However, if none of you returns, it will be another thing."

When the brothers made pledges and gave all sorts of assurances, the sad and grief-stricken father said: "My Lord is a witness to all your pledges. I allow you to take Bin Yaameen with you to Egypt. Allah be with you. Take with you some presents for that great man. Take double the amount with you this time. Don't forget to take the money that was found in your sacks back, as it might have been put there by mistake."

Then he said: "My last advice to you is: "Don't enter the city through the same gate, but enter through different gates. It is not within my power to save you from Allah's Will. The Royal Ruler is He alone. I have trust in Him only and everybody should trust in Him."

BIN YAAMEEN FOR EGYPT

The brothers of Hadrat Yousuf (peace be upon him) entered Egypt in the manner their father had told them to do, but all their plans failed. A faithful servant does his best, but he is quite sure in his mind that his efforts cannot go against Allah's Will which is bound to be done.

The brothers came to the great granary and word was sent to Hadrat Yousuf (peace be upon him) that the brothers had come to the city. He ordered that they should be taken to his residence where he would talk to them.

When Hadrat Yousuf came, the brothers gave him presents they had brought and paid him due respect.

"Is your father well?" he asked.

"Yes", they answered. Then Hadrat Yousuf looked towards Bin Yaameen and said happily, "Is this your youngest brother?" Prophet Yousuf secretly disclosed his identity to his brother Bin Yaameen and warned him not to tell it to anybody.

BIN YAAMEEN DETAINED FOR THEFT

Then Hadrat Yousuf ordered his servants to fill up the bags of all the brothers with grain. He also told them to put the royal measure secretly in Bin Yaameen's sack.

Early next morning, the travellers set out on their journey home. They were indeed happy, for all eleven of them were returning to their father.

They had gone only a few miles when Hadrat Yousuf's steward came riding fast after then and stopping them on the road said: "The royal measure is missing. We doubt that you have taken the measure; so I want to search you."

The brothers declared that they were innocent. The officer said, "Well, what would be the penalty if the measure is found in your baggages." They said that the one in whose possession the measure was found should be detained. Then each one unfolded his sack and opened it for checking. The steward began his search and went down checking their bags. When the steward came to Bin Yaameen's sack, he found the beautiful cup in his bag. The brothers were struck with grief and terror. What woud they do to save Bin Yaameen? How would they satisfy their father for losing another brother? Sick at heart, the men returned to the city and stood once more before the Royal Officer. "What is the matter? Why have you come back?" asked Hadrat Yousuf.

A dreadful silence prevailed for a moment. Then the eldest stepped forward and said: "How can we prove our innocence? We are not thieves. Our younger brother, however, has stolen the cup, his brother was also a thief."

Hadrat Yousuf heard the charge against himself silently and with patience but said nothing. He said to himself: "What wicked people these brothers are: They are calling me a thief in my face. Allah alone knows that they are liars."

Then he gave the verdict that the guilty one would be detained. The rest of them were free to go back to their father.

"Go back to your father!" The very thought brought shivers to the sons of Hadrat Yaqub. They knew the condition of their father, who was yet mourning the loss of Yousuf. The news about Bin Yaameen would certainly kill the old man. Bin Yaameen was detained according to the law followed by the brothers. There was no such law in Egypt. Hadrat Yousuf also followed the same law to detain his brother. The brothers themselves had proposed this punishment for the crime. In this way, through the help and grace of Allah, it became possible for Hadrat Yousuf to detain his brother.

The brothers then told the Royal Officer that their father had great love for his youngest son who was being detained. They also said that their father had very reluctantly allowed Bin Yaameen to come with

them on the trip. But all their arguments failed. At last, the eldest said: "I pray to detain me in this boy's place, but let him go back with his brothers; for we cannot go back to our father without this boy; you may imagine the agony that the father would suffer without him. You may detain anyone of us and let Bin Yaameen go back to the father."

But Hadrat Yousuf said: "God forbid! I cannot detain another man in place of a person who has been found guilty. I do not want to be unjust."

BROTHERS RETURN WITHOUT BIN YAAMEEN

When the brothers lost all hopes, they went aside and started discussing the matter. The eldest said: 'Look, you have given a pledge to your father. You had done the same already in the case of Yousuf'. I will not leave this place unless my father calls me or Allah in His mercy shows some way out. All of you go back and tell father that his son has committed a theft, and say: "If you don't believe us, ask the people of the city or other men of the caravan. But what we say is perfectly true."

But when Hadrat Yaqub heard this story, he said: "You have now made up another story. I shall bear this grief also. It is just possible that Allah may return them both to me. He knows everything. None of His works is without wisdom."

Saying this he sighed: "Ah Yousuf!" and then he turned his face away from his sons. His eyes had already turned white due to weeping for his lost son, and he was melting away in silence because of the killing grief. The sons said: "By God, father! you are killing yourself on account of Yousuf". The father said: "I do not complain before anybody else but Allah and what I know of God's Will, you do not know."

Then he said, "My children, go and make a search for Yousuf and his brother. A believer should not lose

hope. Allah's grace is bound to come. Only the non-believers lose hope and give place to despair in their hearts."

At the father's command, the brothers again went to Egypt. They approached the Royal Officer and pleaded: "Sir, we and our kith and kin are in great distress. Whatever little money we had we have brought with us. Give us as much corn as we need, and if our money can't buy that much, then give us some extra in charity. Allah gives rewards to those who give charity." When Hadrat Yousuf heard of the misery of his own family, he could not hide himself any longer. So he commanded all the officials and servants to leave the room, and when alone, he said to his brothers: "Well! Do you remember what you did with Yousuf and his brother?" Startled at this unexpected question, the brothers cried out: "Are you indeed Yousuf?"

"Yes, I am Yousuf" said the Royal Officer. The brothers stood still and silent before him. They could not speak a word. Their long lost brother had become a ruler in Egypt. For a moment, a strange fear ran through their hearts. They recalled their guilt and were afraid that Yousuf could now take his revenge. In a flash, Prophet Yousuf read their faces and knew what they were thinking about. So he said: "Come nearer to me." When they got close to him, he said, "I am your brother Yousuf whom you threw into the well. Now don't be afraid, today there is no revenge you."

The brothers could hardly believe what they heard. Their brother had forgiven them. They gave a deep sigh of relief.

Then addressing his brothers, Prophet Yousuf said: "Allah has been very kind to us. The fact is that those who are afraid of disobeying Allah, and bear hardships with patience, Allah rewards them generously."

The brothers said: "By God! He has placed you high and granted you great honour. The truth is that we had committed a great folly."

Prophet Yousuf said again: "May Allah also grant you pardon. He is the Kindest of all who are kind. Look! Take my shirt and put it on the face of my father and the sight will return to his eyes. And then return to Egypt with your families."

As the brothers started on a happy return journey, Prophet Yaqub felt a pleasant fragrance coming from Egypt. One day he said: "People of my house! I am smelling a fragrance, as if it were of Yousuf. But I am afraid you will say it is due to the mental weakness of my old age." "Mental weakness it is!" said the people, adding. "By God! You are still toying with the thought of Yousuf."

Prophet Yaqub (peace be upon him) became silent but soon these people were to be proved wrong. The camel caravan had arrived and the carrier of good news flung the shirt of Prophet Yousuf on the face of his grief-stricken father. No sooner did the shirt touch the

face than the long-lost sight returned to the eyes of Prophet Yaqub. He said with a feeling of joy and thankfulness to Allah Almighty: "Didn't I say that my Allah has given me the knowledge of certain things which you don't have?" Then with one voice, the sons said, "O father! forgive us for our faults. Pray to Allah that He may grant us pardon for great sins."

The gracious father replied: "I'll pray to my Lord to forgive you. He is Most Forgiving and Most Merciful."

HAPPY REUNION

Then the whole family of Prophet Yaqub formed itself into a caravan and set out for Egypt. The new comers were received by Prophet Yousuf out of the city as a mark of respect to his parents. He took his parents into his palace, where he seated his father and mother along with him on the throne. It was at this occasion that the whole family bowed before Prophet Yousuf (peace be upon him).

Seeing this, Prophet Yousuf said: "Father, this is the meaning of the dream that I had dreamt in childhood. My Lord has made the dream come true. This is His kindness that he took me out of the dark cells of the prison, and sent you people from the desert to join me. It was so in spite of the wicked Satan, who made the brothers my enemies. Nobody knows the ways of my Lord. The real knowledge is with Him and He is the Wisest of all."

Then Hadrat Yousuf prayed to Allah: "O my Lord, you granted me control over a whole country and gave me wisdom to understand things. O my Lord! You are the Creator of the Heavens and the Earth. You alone can grant success in this world and also in the world after death. Cause me to die on Islam, and join me with your righteous men."

LESSONS TO REMEMBER

1. Man has very little knowledge. Things which he thinks are bad for him turn out to be good, and things which he regards as useful prove to be harmful.
2. Very often it happens that trials and troubles become means of success for man provided he undergoes them with patience to please his God, and obeys His commands without regard for the outcome.
3. The path of Allah is not a bed of roses. A faithful servant of Allah treads the right path even if the going is hard. He refuses to disobey Allah even at the cost of wealth and comfort and is ready to face all troubles and discomforts. He does so because he is sure that the real comfort is the comfort of the next life that is permanent; the troubles of this world, however hard, shall come to an end one day.
4. Righteous persons will be rewarded by Allah for their good deeds, in the life after death. He often gives them comfort, wealth and respect in this world also. But a faithful servant bows before Allah in thankfulness for those comforts, and always keeps Allah's pleasure in his mind.
5. Those who want to spread goodness in the world should themselves be so clean that the people

who come into contact with them should testify to their noble character.

6. One should wait for a proper time to teach people good things to bring them over to the right path. As soon as one gets such an opportunity one should present the whole truth before them.
7. A faithful servant cannot follow any law other than the law of Allah.
8. Nobody has knowledge of the unknown except Allah. If Allah wills, He passes this knowledge to His Prophets or other righteous men. Prophet Yaqub had been weeping for his son for almost twenty–two years. He did not have the means to get correct news even about his son Prophet Yousuf. But when Allah willed, Prophet Yaqub started smelling the fragrance of Prophet Yousuf as soon as the caravan set out homeward with his shirt.
9. The mission before a faithful servant of Allah is to spread goodness and to wipe out evil. He does this work in extremely bad conditions in the face of great hardships. But he does not ignore his great mission even in comfort and prosperity. Prophet Yousuf (peace be upon him) spread the message of Allah in the prison, but even when he got power, he spent all his energy in establishing the creed of Allah.

10. The righteous men of Allah forgive the worst offences of their enemies, even when they have full power over them to take revenge. They do not harm anybody for their own sake. They raise their hands to punish the people only when it is absolutely necessary in the interest of Allah's Commandments.
11. Prayer is the greatest source of strength for an obedient servant of Allah. The prayer of Prophet Yousuf should be read again and again and its meanings understood. Then only will it become clear that a righteous man does not break his contact with his Allah, even when he is well–provided with all means of happiness and comfort.

Dear children! You should learn this prayer by heart.